

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

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VOL. 3.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. Editor—If you consider the following *hints*, worthy of a place in your interesting paper, you are requested to insert them and oblige E. W.

HINTS.

First. If God is the creator of all things and beings, and the endower of all things and beings, the Devil, from whom all sin flows into the world, had his existence and endowments from God : consequently sin first emanated from God.

Second. If God created all things, and pervades and animates all things, and is perfect ; sin cannot exist, because imperfection cannot exist where perfection exists.

Third. If God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, and therefore perfect, all things must be in subjection to him, because where these powers exist, nothing can exist contrary to the will of the being so endowed.

Fourth. If God is perfect, and has existed from eternity, his works have also all existed from eternity, because, if there was a time when God's works were not completed, God's works were imperfect ; otherwise, if we say that God's works were made in the natural order and certainty of physical fate, and are subject to, and governed by this order and certainty, he is then imperfect. But Christians say God is perfect.

Fifth. If God is perfect, all his works are perfect, because a perfect being cannot create an imperfect work.

Sixth. If God is all merciful, which he must be if he is endowed with infinite perfection, misery could not exist, because infinite mercy cannot witness misery.

Seventh. If God is infinite in wisdom and power, all his works are, and for ever were, perfect, and in accordance with his will and pleasure, because the works of infinite power and wisdom are perfect. But the Christian creed supposes vast and signal interruptions in the established order of things as evidence of the very existence of their God.

Eighth. If God is perfect, all sensitive beings of a similar grade, are equal in happiness, because partiality exists only where imperfection exists.

Athens, April 14th, 1828.

CATO.

NATURAL PHENOMENA.

Mr. Editor—The priests who set up for sages and hold the people in subjection by means of an assumed superiority of knowledge, never choose to confess that they know not the causes of remarkable occurrences, because that would reduce them to the same level with the people. Every set of priests, therefore, throughout the priest-afflicted world, are provided

with "a full, true, and particular account" of the origin of the principal natural phenomena observable in the economy of the universe. The Genesis account is one of the most imperfect, as well as erroneous of these inventions. It is plain that if the Deity had inspired Moses to describe the cosmogony, he would have prompted him to give such an outline of the creation, and of the objects which the various parts of it were to answer, as would consist with subsequent observations. But the entire ignorance it evinces of the nature and causes of the atmospheric facts, proves that at the time it was composed nothing was known concerning the natural sciences, and that any tale could impose on the vulgar that it suited the sacerdotal worthies to circulate. There came rain from the clouds. Then (said the priests) there must be a reservoir behind the firmament; we must say God put the heavens to divide the waters. There were two shining bodies; we must say they were put there to light the earth. [Of the vivifying *heat* of the sun no mention is made, although it is the principal use of that body.] Thus every thing existing is still affirmed to have been made for the particular purpose to which man applies it; and we see in the never ending argument of "design," the same convenient mode of accounting for what we do not comprehend that has been pursued from the earliest periods.

Now that the solar system and the knowledge of meteorology have become better understood, we can discern the relation of antecedent and consequent among several facts of the nature of which the early nations were wholly ignorant, and therefore assumed that they were expressly designed to answer a particular purpose. All they knew was that the events were productive of certain useful ends; but these ends might have been secondary and subordinate to certain greater results, for any thing they knew to the contrary. The ascribing peculiar functions to the sun and moon which are not fulfilled by experience, only shews in a most forcible manner that *design* may just as well be inferred from false premises as from true ones, and that it is worthless as an argument.

The inhabitants of the Tonga islands believe the account which their priesthood has constructed of the beginning of the existence of these islands, quite as implicitly as good Christians swallow the Mosaic one. According to this tradition, it is believed that there was once nothing but a great sea; that a Giant was one day angling, out of the sky, and that he felt something very heavy at the end of his rod; he pulled it up and it proved to be the island of Tonga. This is one of the simplest derivations that have ever been ascribed to the world, and it is at least full as intelligible as those which more enlightend nations continue to propagate.

The universal propensity to refer natural facts, of which the proximate cause is unknown, to supernatural interposition, will never be subdued so long as the pernicious notion of "design" continues in force. Until mankind shall overcome the repugnance to saying, "I do not know," we shall be infested with false, foolish, and misguiding theories. The ignorant are ever ready to credit legends connected with any remarkable physical fact. The position of a large stone, a peculiarly shaped stone, a deep ravine or fissure, caves, even now serve to hang a supernatural story upon: any thing, with weak minds, is preferable to acknowledging they do not know the cause. Even the black mark along the back of the ass cannot be suffered to remain unexplained. An ancient notion prevails among Christians

that this streak took its date from the day Jesus rode on one, and that he bestowed the mark on the assine race in perpetuity, as an honorary token of the service it rendered him; being in the form of a cross. That this popular story was invented to suit the fact of the ass's stripe is sufficiently apparent, and it is probable that all the ancient accounts of the origin of atmospheric occurrences and remarkable appearances in the substances of nature, were founded on equally unsubstantial grounds.

During the whole of the account of the first pair being put forth out of Eden, we find no mention of any penalty extending beyond the natural life of man. He is told that he shall earn his subsistence by labour and sweat—the woman is informed that she shall bring forth in sorrow. This is the sum of the denunciation! and yet on this is built a most complicated statement of what we have lost by Adam and Eve's sin; of what we should have had if they had not so misbehaved; of the urgent necessity of an intercessor to soften the dreadful severity of the sentence, and to procure by the painful sacrifice of his own life, a partial restoration to the forfeited privileges of the human race. It is truly lamentable to see how easily we suffer ourselves to be duped on the subject of religious belief. Though we have the book of Genesis open for us to examine, wherein nothing is said about future punishment or rewards, we prefer taking the assertion of priests on the subject, who assure us that we were at the time of Adam's sin consigned to eternal posthumous torments, which nothing short of God's own son's death, as an atonement, could possibly avert.

The only two punishments pronounced by God (according to Genesis) continue to operate. Man gets nothing from the earth without labour, and woman's travail is sorrowful enough. But the necessity for labour is no great affliction, and the woman is not compelled to bear children unless she consent. Thus it would seem that all the nonsense about the fall of man, the sinfulness which supervened upon it, the horrible penalties, the necessity for atonement, &c. are the inventions of priestcraft, and have no foundation in the Old Testament.

PHILO.

THE INDIAN'S LETTER.—NO IV.

According to your wishes I shall write concerning the Deity, or, more properly speaking the belief in an Omnipotent being. This being is so wrapped up in gloom, terror, and consequence, that we approach him in thought with trembling and diffidence; and, as we are taught, we think it damnable to doubt, for a moment, his existence, or to question his extremest cruelty, fraud, and injustice. Hence we scarcely come to this investigation with much more than half of our reasoning powers; the rest are absorbed by a legitimate superstition, begotten in youth on our ignorance; matured by precept and example, and confirmed by surrounding bigotry. Let us sever this chain, and, with a modest assurance, undauntedly approach the author of our being as a good and dutiful son would approach a kind and indulgent parent.

Such a being, we feel confident, will not be offended at the liberty we take in using the reason he has been graciously pleased to bestow on us; nor accuse us of blasphemy if we even doubt the representations given of him by the priesthood, or hesitate to credit his imputed attributes. For if he pleased, he could reveal himself to our perfect satisfaction in a moment.

or amihilate us for our temerity. Since, then, he leaves us to doubt, to argue and to reason, it is very probable, that, in some future period, there will be little argument and no doubt on the subject. Reason and sense will never bewilder themselves with incomprehensible metaphysics, in which numberless theses, cases and arguments commence and terminate in absolute conjecture. Religious impostors, when they come forth in some future day, to preach repentance to sinners, for the good of themselves, will only be considered as madmen, fools or knaves ; and, in either case, a cell, some straw and bread and water will act equally as a punishment for crime and a restorative to sanity. Indeed, when we come to consider the thing in a clear light, these very fools, knaves and madmen are proofs against their own divinity. But one of the strongest arguments for the non-existence of the Christian deity, is the *existence of hypocrisy*. For why should he permit a villain to deceive men in his name, when it is only the respect they have for the deity himself which permits the imposition. This, and the absurd, stupid doctrines which the priests of every sect preach up, are almost enough to destroy even the firm belief of a devout deist. Is it not surprising that such things exist in spite of sense, reason, truth and experience ? Is it not surprising that fanatics, who are absolutely madmen, shall make fools of men of sense, or, at least, of apparent sense. At times, I feel myself struck with something which puts on the semblance of truth, and which I entertain for a time, until sober reflection and reason determine against it. Then away goes my creed without leaving a sign of its ever having been. This argues nothing. I trouble no one with the vain cogitation, and, to myself, it only shews me my ignorance and want of solid foundation for thought.

Nothing—never could produce something. Without a something nothing could never have been. Without a creator, nothing could never have been created. From nothing—nothing will ever proceed to eternity. If so, and the case is clear that it must be so, then omnipotence must have had a beginning and a creator. For nothing could never create its nonentity into everlasting and unreducible matter. This, I presume, is a silencer, and he must think deeper than I can who will attempt to explain the mystery farther. But, in reality, there is no mystery in the case. We are all here, and we wonder like fools where we came from : we find this world under our feet, and we wonder who made it. We have a certain account, or rather a number of different accounts when it was made, and we all again wonder how old it is. Then, we think, some great Geni must have made it, and we wonder who he is, or what he is like. All the old women and children can tell you he is like a man. Though some very sage philosophers have said he was like a fish, others an ox, others a monkey or baboon ; some a sun, a moon, a star, an elephant, a crocodile, a shark, an egg, a stock, a stick, a stone, a tree ; until, at last, some say the world is God, and every creature in it a Godling. All this argues only the profound ignorance of man, and the frailty of human nature. But here we must not forget the impudent assertion of those who have dared to say, that they have seen the deity face to face and conversed with him as with a man.

The monsters, tree, plant, ox, monkey, or man, then, comprehend the great Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Incomprehensible Jehovah ; this inconceivable being, who created every thing ; is in every thing ; with-

out being perceivable to sight or feeling, is every where, and only reveals himself to one man, once in two or three thousand years. But, in the interim, plays at slaughtering men and destroying them by universal and partial deluges, by earthquakes, storms, tempests, thunder, lightning, plague, famine, war, battle, murder, massacre, and an infinity of other means, whereby, in the room of being merciful, good, and just, he proves himself to be the most resentful, capricious, cruel, unjust tyrant that even infernal cunning could conceive, or infernal agency produce. It is said, that all nations, rude, savage, and civilized, have an idea of a God; and this is called a proof of the being of a divinity. But this is not true, in the first place; and if it were a fact, would prove nothing; for all their ideas are imperfect, and no two of them agree in any one instance, except some little relation as to his general character of a terrible, resentful, and implacable tyrant, agreeing in principle with a Marius, a Sylla, a Tiberius, or a Nero; still, however, divesting these of any little particle of humanity which might have been in their character. Such Gods deserve not a place in the universe. One thing we can see very plain, and that is, that all the idol makers have been a set of cruel, ignorant, stupid, bigoted fools and knaves. The unparalleled confusion of the Athanasian Creed is a full proof of this; none else is necessary. Repeatedly have the Liberals told the creed-mongers, that they would believe directly if they, the creed-mongers, would explain, or demonstrate, in any degree, their incomprehensible dogmas. I, for one, say plainly, I cannot believe in what I cannot comprehend: and further, I do believe every man who says he believes in what he does not comprehend, to be a base hypocrite, and an unpardonable deceiver; a man who is made up of every kind of falsehood and treachery; a man in whom society can place no trust; a man whose whole business is to impose on the credulous and to betray those he deceives, and whose tremendous Idol, who rides in the whirlwind, lives in the tempest, speaks in thunder, and breathes blood and desolation, sanctifies each action, commends his deceit, approves all his atrocities, and is only wroth when he discovers a trait of humanity in the wretch who adores him. All the Idols of mankind are vindictive, capricious, cruel, revengeful, easily raised to anger, and their fury only to be allayed by blood, slaughter, fire, general ruin, and the destruction of thousands of the weak creatures whom they have formed. This is the character of the great idols, Brama, Odin, Jöls, Foh, Moloch, Jehovah and many others. The Greek Jupiter seems to be a being of greater benignity than the others; yet he is nothing better than a parricide, usurper and libertine monarch, for ever committing rapes, adulteries and murders. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that an almighty, allwise, creator and ruler of the universe, would not permit such wretches to profane his name, deceive mankind, and render his own being doubtful and detestable; for we hold it as a maxim, that omitting to do good is a committing of evil: and from what we see and learn by our experience in this world, we must absolutely conclude, that the Christian God must be a very unjust being. Devout persons pretend to see a first cause in the surrounding firmament, and infer, that without something, nothing could have been; yet they make out the great architect to be a mighty nothing, which they call an immaterial spirit, omnipresent, pervading all matter and occupying all space; existing in all things; yet undiscoverable, untangible, indescribable and incompre-

hensible. The idea of a spirit, without form and void of matter ; creating something out of nothing ; composing worlds for his own amusement, and destroying them for his spite, is unaccountably inconsistent and ridiculous, and savours strongly of monastic conception and monkish puerility. It is strange that the character of the Gods in general is that of the worst tyrants among men. Delighting in flattery, homage and supplication ; irritable, unappeaseable, sacrificing every thing to their lusts and resentments ; childish and fickle in their friendships ; curious, cautious, and jealous in their dispositions, and most detestable in all their proceedings. These may be reasons and convincing arguments with Christians in favour of their divinity ; but I candidly confess, that they nearly shake my belief to pieces ; nor have I ever yet met with one convincing reason to hang a proof on ; nor is it possible where all is only conjecture, and where reality can never be established. "How came we here ? How came all things to be ?" they triumphantly ask, as if this was a full solution of the important question. I answer directly and candidly, I do not know more than you, and you know no more about it than the dullest ass on the common. Ay, but they tell me, they do know and they believe. Here I doubt their veracity and question their authority ; for that which makes them to believe fills me with infinite doubt, and leads me to decide directly against all their doctrines, and creeds, and the whole immaterial world ; nor shall I ever believe in any thing without a positive demonstration. So much for the present on this incomprehensible subject.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1828.

LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible,
By the Secretary.

LECTURE XIII. (Continued from page 204.)

I HAVE NOW arrived in my examination of the old testament, or Jewish books, at the 38th chapter of Genesis ; in which we have a long story about a prostitute, named Tamer ; with some indelicate remarks ; which, although they are of a piece with many other portions of this *immaculate* book, I feel myself called on, by a regard for decency, to avoid reading.

Those who can find in the lascivious Songs of Solomon, food for the gratification of what they call a *spiritual* taste, may, perhaps, discover some exquisite beauties—some highly refined sentiments—or, in the cant of fanaticism, some *type* of Christ and his church in this narration of Jewish wantonness—But I confess that, in my carnal eyes, it appears utterly unworthy of a god of purity, and, if found in any other book than the bible, would cause it to be rejected with contempt and abhorrence. Yet, we are told that this deity, this Almighty being, whom the priests represent as infinitely perfect and beyond the comprehension of mortals, so far degraded himself as to become the author of a work containing so many obscene passages that it cannot be perused by the creatures he has made, and for whose use it was specially intended, without raising a blush on the cheek of innocence.

The Christians have established societies in various parts of the world for suppressing vice, by putting down what they call blasphemous, and indecent publications. Under this pretence, the publishers of the works of Paine and of Palmer have been fined and imprisoned in England ; and even in this free country, where no legal obstruction exists as to publishing works of that description, it has been attempted to affix a stigma on all who engage in this business, as if they were violators of some moral principle, or disturbers of public tranquillity. So far, however, from these liberal publications being in any way injurious to good morals, I have no hesitation in saying that there is more vulgar and coarse language—more scurrility and ribaldry—more gross indecency and blasphemy, in one chapter of the “ holy book,” than is to be found in all the liberal or deistical works extant.

Were the societies or individuals who profess to aim at the suppression of vice really actuated by that motive, the first book they would lay their hands on is the bible ; than which there is not a more indecent, lascivious, immoral, or pernicious book in the world. But the pretence of these men is a mere shuffle by which to violate the rights of one portion of the community, without awakening the jealousy of the other. All their projects of putting down vice, have originated with the priesthood, for the purpose of supporting their craft. The priests are the life and soul of all the societies ; although they have a few weak-headed laymen numbered amongst them. They are associations of knaves and simpletons : the object of the knaves is apparent : the simpletons act without any object, and have been, not inaptly, compared to the clown who applauds the profession of legerdemain merely to promote the success of the trickery of his employer. The priest and the conjuror are both knaves ; and their trades flourish only where the people are ignorant enough to be duped. Superior cunning is their only superiority ; and the increasing knowledge of the age their greatest bane, and must eventually be their total annihilation.

It has been frequently regretted, that internal evidence, or that which always accompanies the promulgation of the laws of Nature, does not make a deeper and more lasting impression on the human mind. Dreams, incoherent stories, and extravagancies of every kind, are listened to with a zeal and avidity destructive of all correct operations of intellect, and subversive of the foundations of moral certainty. Historic details, even when wild and extravagant, have something in them fascinating. Those who are unaccustomed to philosophic reflection, are easily induced to yield a ready attention to the narratives of marvellous and wonderful events ; and in proportion to the times and places when and where such things are said to have happened, are removed at a distance, they seem to assume a sacredness of character, and are covered with the inviolable gloss of antiquity. Such is the fact as to the story of Joseph. It is a compound of the marvellous, the simple, the sympathetic and the deceptive. It has been read in the Christian world with universal applause ; but it has never been analyzed, or its true character exposed.

Joseph, it seems, who was an excellent dreamer, and a still more excellent interpreter of dreams, had offended his brethren, for which they conspired against his life ; but afterwards rescinded their resolution, and sold him to a travelling company of Ishmaelites, who again disposed of him to the Egyptians. This Jewish slave, merely by the conjuring art of in-

terpreting dreams, raised himself to a state of affluence, power, and splendour under Pharaoh, then king of the country. The lascivious desires, and intriguing conduct of Potiphar's wife, had prepared for the hitherto ill-fated Joseph, scenes of fresh difficulty. His non-compliance with her amorous solicitations, had created in her bosom the sentiments of revenge. Joseph was thrown into prison; from which, however, his dream interpreting skill procured an enlargement. From this moment he became the rallying point of credulous fools; and the magicians of the country were shorn, in a great measure, of their magical glory.

Dreaming appears to have been much in vogue in those days, and the interpretation of dreams a matter of vast importance. Pharaoh, like other foolish dreamers, wished to have his dreams interpreted. Joseph was called on for this purpose, and the royal dream was stated in this manner; "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed; and behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine, and fat fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, out of the river, ill favoured and lean fleshed; and stood by the other kine, upon the brink of the river. And the ill-favoured and the lean fleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat fleshed kine; so Pharaoh awoke." This is one dream. After this, the king took a nap, and dreamed again in a similar manner about seven full ears of corn, &c.—These dreams were explained by Joseph to mean seven years of plenty, and seven years of famine. According to this interpretation Joseph set about monopolizing the produce of the country, and of preparing a scene of speculation, and of despotic influence, which terminated in extorting from the Egyptians all their money and cattle; and then followed the loss of their personal liberty.

All this (observes Palmer) may be said to have been wise and benevolent in Joseph; because without this arrangement the people must all have perished. If, however, he was inspired by his God with a foreknowledge of this wonderful long famine, would it not have been more honourable to him and the Deity whom he adored to have abstained from cruelty and extortion? But this Jewish God had ways of working peculiar to himself, the propriety and justice of which reason will never be able to discover. Faith however can swallow down every thing, and some people imagine that the more absurd the thing believed is, the more merit there is in believing. Both the manner and the matter of this strange story of Joseph, stamp the whole translation with fiction or with falsehood. How can the dreams of an Egyptian monarch even if interpreted by a Jewish slave, be considered as divine revelation? Dreams are but an imperfect operation of the mind, wild, disordered, and full of absurdity; yet they are made means of communication between heaven and earth, and one half of the revelations of the world rest upon this baseless and miserable foundation. If God intended to reveal himself at all to man, he would employ some better method than that of a half sleeping and half waking imagination. As to the business of interpreting dreams, it is a mere conjuring trade; nothing but the most stupid credulity could inspire any confidence in the interpreter's skill.

Towards the close of Genesis, we have the famous prophecy about the coming of Shiloh, which the ingenuity of Christian interpreters has converted into a prediction of the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. According

to the translation now in use, the words are : "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Some translate this passage thus : "the authority shall for ever be in Judah, when the Messiah comes."—Others have it—"the authority shall be in Judah, till the messenger receive in Shiloh the sovereign power." There are some who render the passage in this manner—"the people of Judah shall be in affliction till the messenger of the Lord comes to put an end to it ;" and according to others "till the city of Shiloh be destroyed."

Which of these interpretations ought to be adopted as the true one, it is manifestly impossible to say. From one of them, it would seem that the word *Shiloh* meant a city: from another, that it was the name of a man. But supposing that it was intended to signify a man, it remains to be proved that this man was Jesus of Nazareth, who, amidst all the names given him by his superstitious votaries, never appears to have been designated by that of *Shiloh*.

That this pretended prophecy had no reference to the founder of Christianity, is also evident from another circumstance. "The sceptre (says the text) was not to *depart* from Judah until Shiloh came." Now the sceptre had departed from Judah centuries before the period when Jesus is said to have appeared on earth. Even taking their own history to be true, the sovereign power was annihilated by the Babylonish captivity, and never has been restored since. The attempt, therefore, to make this obscure passage a prophecy of the coming of a Messiah, and that that Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth, is ridiculous and absurd.

The book of Exodus commences with accusing the king of Egypt of exercising oppression and cruelty on the Israelites, who, according to the representations of the writer, had now become so numerous as to cause considerable alarm in the mind of Pharaoh for his crown and dignity. To allay his fears, he could think of no other plan than to prevent an increase of the Jewish males by ordering the midwives, when a man-child was born, to put it to death. This barbarous order it would appear was disregarded by these women ; and the reason assigned in the text is, that they saved the men children alive because they feared the Lord ; whereas the more probable reason is, if we can permit ourselves to believe any part of the story, that their natural feelings would not permit them to imbrue their hands in the blood of innocent unoffending children. In the 21st verse of the 1st chapter it is said, "And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he (that is God,) made them houses."—This was a very paltry reward for the humanity they had shown in braving the orders of a king so powerful as Pharaoh must have been. Methinks they were entitled to some higher mark of distinction, particularly as Jehovah the giver is represented as having been extremely bountiful to all who stood in awe of, or feared him. But be this as it may, it is evident that the kindness of God to the midwives in making them houses—an interposition of divine favour of which Pharaoh could not be ignorant, had no other effect on that monarch than to cause him to renew the decree of extermination : "And Pharaoh charged all his people saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

The story of the Jewish Lawgiver having been rescued from this untimely death by the interposition of Pharaoh's daughter, must be familiar to you all. I shall, therefore, not detain you by a perusal of it, but proceed to an examination of the narrative as it relates to the subsequent adventures of the meek and murdering Moses, who is so highly extolled, by Jewish as well as Christian writers, as the intimate friend and companion of God.

It will be recollected that in a former part of this inquiry, I spoke of Moses as altogether an imaginary being, whose adventures as related in the bible, bore a striking resemblance to those of Bacchus, as we find them detailed in the writings of the orientals; in fact, that Moses was no other than one of the constellations, invented by the Chaldeans, or some other nation more remote, from whom they borrowed it, and which was afterwards personified, for the purpose of imposing, in the dark ages, on the credulity of the multitude. As I have had no reason to view the subject in any other light since I expressed this opinion, it will be readily perceived that any remarks in which I may be supposed to recognise the actual existence of such a person as Moses, are merely hypothetical, and made for the sake of illustration, that we may be able, on their own showing, to exhibit this pretended legislator in the light in which he is represented in writings respected both by Jews and Christians.

Progress of Liberal Opinions.—In laying the following letters before our readers, we are confident they will participate with us in the pleasure we feel at the undeniable evidence which these letters afford of the rapid advancement of correct principles; and that while we are zealously endeavoring, in this city, to break down the strong hold of superstition, we are not without co-operators, in other parts of the Union, who are as ardently and as devotedly engaged in the same glorious cause. With such auxiliaries, who can doubt of success?—Let their example be followed by only a tenth part of those who entertain similar sentiments, and before another year goes round, the priesthood will have little to boast of in this mentally enslaved country.

Germantown, April 1st, 1828.

Mr. Editor—I received the numbers of the *Correspondent* for which I had written to you, and feel thankful that you have sent all that were published of Vol. 3d. I am very much pleased with the appearance as well as the matter they contain.—Liberal principles are gaining ground very fast in my neighbourhood. Ten years ago I was the only person in the place who dared openly to deny a future state of rewards and punishments, and the divinity of Christ. I was then looked upon as a very dangerous person, notwithstanding my moral character, against which nothing could be said. I was assailed on all sides, both by the clergy and laymen. I was frequently called an Infidel and a heretic: after which I read "Volney's Ruins" a book that created in me a thirst after truth and knowledge. I now wished to get a peep into Paine's works. After a great deal of enquiry, I found a man who had them, but would not lend them unless I promised to lock them up when I was not reading them. Having perused them, I prevailed on him to sell them to me. Within the last three years, I lent Volney and Paine to a number of my neighbours, who now begin to think

for themselves, instead of paying the clergy to think for them ; and I have to bear all the blame for "leading so many astray," as the clergy and their priest-ridden followers are pleased to term it.

In addition to the above books, we have among us *Ecce Homo*, the *Spiritual Mustard Pot*, *Palmer's Principles of Nature*, *Christianity Unveiled*, the *New Harmony Gazette*, and the *Correspondent*, all of which we freely lend to our neighbours. I can now as openly avow the principles contained in these works, as I could the doctrine of universalism ten years ago—and I do not hesitate in doing it—It is to be regretted that so many who in private conversation find so much fault with the clergy, have not moral courage openly to protest against them, or rather against their proceedings of draining the poor and ignorant of their money. G. H.

Mr. George Houston,

Buffalo, 7th April, 1828.

Dear Sir—I have been travelling almost every day since the first of December, which I offer as an apology for not having attended to my subscription to the *Correspondent*. We are starting a periodical at Lockport "*Priestcraft Exposed*", and another at Rochester being a revival of "*Plain Truth*". I have been some time engaged preparing a dose for the begging society Bible, Missionary, Tract, Pious Youth, &c &c. ten in number, which I intend to have printed at Rochester in one of the newspapers, and then have *Three Thousand* extra copies in a handbill form to be sent to every house in all the principal villages between this and Utica.

A meeting was held here some time ago in relation to a piety line of boats and stages, at which I attended. It was left for me to speechify on our side of the question, and the result was, that not a cent was subscribed and nothing done that could raise a hope of their ever succeeding. The agents who came from Rochester, on their return, published in their pious papers, that after the good people had come together at Buffalo "*Satan also came among them.*" The person pointed at could not be mistaken, and so I take it upon myself to give them a lesson that may induce them to let me alone in future. The brick Presbyterian church here is in a ferment, and a quarrel with their priest. They are \$10,000 in debt, and their congregation lessening daily. I threaten them, that if the church is sold under the Sheriff, I will (*if I am able*) purchase it for a *steam mill*, and stick a high pressure steam engine into it, that shall blow out the steam at the top of the steeple, so as to be heard at Niagara falls. I take a sort of *Christian* care and oversight of the State of Ohio, bordering on the Lake, from Pennsylvania to Michigan, and have the satisfaction to know, that there is but one Gospel Mill in successful operation on the whole route, and that is at Euclid, in the country, ten miles from Cleveland; the miller gets but \$200 per annum, so that you can guess what kind of preaching they get. I will send you some of my "*Exploders*" as soon as printed.

You may have inferred from my long silence that I have been lukewarm in the cause; but this is not the case, and had you been over the ground that I have travelled, you would think I have been a faithful shepherd. It is amusing for me to look back and contrast the ill treatment I have received days past, with the kindness and civility with which I am now treated by all classes, gentle and simple. Their kind treatment, only inflames my desires to be useful, and to pour out upon them the full measure of that light which circumstances have bestowed upon me. I. S. S.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Hindoo Bards.—A “Bhat” or bard, came to ask a gratuity. The Bhats are a sacred order all through Rajapootana. Their race was especially created by Mahadoe, for the purpose of guarding his sacred bull; but they lost this honourable office through their cowardice. The god had a pet lion also; and as the favourite animals were kept in the same apartment, the bull was eaten almost every day, in spite of all the noise which the Bhats could make; greatly to the grief of Siva, and to the increase, since he had to create a new bull in the room of every one which fell a victim to the ferocity of his companion. Under these circumstances, the deity formed a new race of men, the Charuns, but more courageous than the Bhats, and made them the wardens of his menagerie. The Bhats, however, still retain their functions of singing the praises of gods and heroes: and, as the hereditary guardians of history and pedigree, are held in higher estimation than even the Brahmins themselves among the haughty and fierce nobles of Rajapootana. In the yet wilder districts to the south-west the more warlike Charuns, however, take their place in popular reverence. A few years back it was usual for merchants or travellers going through Malwah and Guzerat, to hire a Charun to protect them; and the sanctity of his name was generally sufficient. If robbers appeared, he stepped forward, waving his long white garments, and denouncing, in verse, infamy and disgrace on all those who injure travellers under the protection of the holy minstrels of Siva. If this failed, he stabbed himself with his dagger generally in the arm, declaring that his blood was on their heads; that if all failed, he was bound in honour to stab himself to the heart, a catastrophe of which there was little danger, since the violent death of such a person was enough to devote the whole land to barrenness, and all who occasioned it to an everlasting abode in Padalon. The Bhats protect nobody; but to kill or beat one of them would be regarded as very disgraceful and ill-omened; and presuming on this immunity which it confers, they are said often to extort money from their wealthy neighbours by promises of spreading their great name, and threats of making them infamous and even of blasting their prospects. A wealthy merchant in Indore, some years since, had a quarrel with one of these men, who made a clay image which he called after the merchant’s name, and daily in the bazaar, and in the different temples addressed it with bitter and reproachful language, intermixed with all the frightful curses which an angry poet could invent. There was no redress; and the merchant, though a man of great power and influence at court, was advised to bribe him into silence; this he refused to do, and the matter went on several months, till a number of the merchant’s friends subscribed a considerable sum, of which, with much submission and joined hands, they entreated the Bhat to accept. “Alas!” was his answer, “why was not this done before? Had I been conciliated in time, your friend might yet have prospered. But now, though I shall be silent henceforth, I have said too much against him; and when did the imprecations of a bard, so long persisted in, fall to the ground unaccomplished?” The merchant, as it happened, was really overtaken by some severe calamities; and the popular faith in the powers of the minstrel cha-

racter is now more than ever confirmed.—*Bishop Heber's Narrative of a Journal through the Upper provinces of India.*

St. Blase.—Ribadeneira relates, that St. Blase lived in a cave, whither wild beasts came daily to visit him, and be cured by him; “and if it happened that they came while he was at prayer, they did not interrupt him, but waited till he had ended, and never departed without his benediction. He was discovered in his retirement, imprisoned, and cured a youth who had a fish-bone stuck in his throat by praying.” Ribadeneira further says that *Ætius*, an ancient Greek physician, gave the following

Recipe for a stoppage in the throat:

“Hold the diseased party by the throat, and pronounce these words:—*Blase, the martyr and servant of Jesus Christ, commands thee to pass up or down!*”

The same Jesuit relates, that St. Blase was scourged, and seven holy women anointed themselves with his blood; whereupon their flesh was combed with iron combs, their wounds ran nothing but milk, their flesh was whiter than snow, angels came visibly and healed their wounds as fast as they were made; and they were put into the fire, which would not consume them; wherefore they were ordered to be beheaded, and were beheaded accordingly. Then St. Blase was ordered to be drowned in the lake; but he walked on the water, sat down on it in the middle, and invited the infidels to a sitting; whereupon threescore and eight, who tried the experiment, were drowned, and St. Blase walked back to be beheaded.

The “Golden Legend” says, that a wolf having run away with a woman’s swine, she prayed St. Blase that she might have her swine again, and St. Blase promised her, with a smile, she should, and the wolf brought the swine back; then she slew it, and offered the head and the feet, with some bread and a candle, to St. Blase. “And he thanked God, and ate thereof; and he said to her, that every yere she sholde offre in his chirche a candell. And she dyd all her lyf, and she had moche grete prosperyte. And knowe thou that to the, and to all them that so shal do, shal well happen to them.”

It is observed in a note on Brand, that the candles offered to St. Blase were said to be good for the tooth-ache, and for diseased cattle.

Abbot.—This word *abbas* in Latin and Greek, *abba* in Chaldee and Syriac,—came from from the Hebrew *ab*, meaning *father*. The Jewish doctors took this title through pride; therefore Jesus said to his disciples, “Call no one your father upon the earth, for one is your father who is in heaven.” Although St. Jerome was much enraged against the monks of his time, who, in spite of the command, gave or received the title of *abbot*, the sixth council of Paris decided, that if abbots are spiritual fathers and beget spiritual sons for the Lord, it is with reason that they are called abbots.

According to this decree, if any one deserved this appellation, it belonged most assuredly to St. Benedict, who, in the year 529, founded on mount Cassino in the kingdom of Naples, that society so eminent for wisdom and discretion, and so grave in their speech and in their style. These are the

terms used by Pope St. Gregory, who does not fail to mention the singular privilege which it pleased God to grant to this holy founder—that all Benedictines who die on Mount Cassino are saved. It is not, then, surprising that these monks reckon sixteen thousand canonized saints of their order. The Benedictine sisters even assert, that they are warned of their approaching dissolution by some nocturnal noise, which they call *the knocks of St. Benedict*.

It may be supposed that this holy Abbot did not forget himself when begging the salvation of his disciples. Accordingly, on the 21st of March, 543, the eve of Passion-Sunday, which was the day of his death, two monks, one of them in the monastery, the other at a distance from it, had the same vision. They saw a long road covered with carpets, and lighted by an infinite number of torches, extending eastward from the monastery to heaven. A venerable personage appeared, and asked them for whom this road was made? They said, they did not know. It is that, rejoined he, by which Benedict, the well beloved of God, has ascended into heaven. An order in which salvation was so well secured, soon extended itself into other states, whose sovereigns allowed themselves to be persuaded that, to be sure of a place in Paradise, it was only necessary to make themselves a friend in it, and that by donations to the churches they might atone for the most crying injustice and the most enormous crimes.

Charles Martel.—This great captain was damned, body and soul, for having rewarded his captains by giving them abbeys. A holy bishop of Lyons, named Eucher, being at prayer, had the following vision : he thought that he was led by an angel into hell, where he saw Charles Martel, who, the angel informed him, had been condemned to everlasting flames by the saints whose churches he had despoiled. St. Eucher wrote an account of this revelation to Boniface, bishop of Mayence, and to Fulrad, grand-chaplain to Pepin le-bref, praying them to open the tomb of Charles Martel and see if his body was there. The tomb was opened ; the interior of it bore marks of fire, but nothing was found in it except a great serpent which issued forth with a cloud of offensive smoke.

St. Paul the first Hermit.—The life of St. Paul, the first hermit, is said, by Butler, to have been written by St. Jerome in 365, who received an account of it from St. Anthony and others. According to him, when twenty-two years old, St. Paul fled from the persecution of Decius to a cavern, near which grew a palm-tree that supplied him with leaves for clothing, and fruit for food, till he was forty-three years of age ; after which he was daily fed by a raven till he was ninety, and then died. St. Anthony, in his old age, being tempted by vanity, imagined himself the first hermit till the contrary was revealed to him in a dream, wherefore, the next morning, he set out in search of St. Paul. “St. Jerome relates from his authors,” says Butler, “that he met a centaur, or creature, not with the nature and properties, but with something of the mixt shape of man and horse ; and that this monster, or phantom of the devil, [St. Jerome pretends not to determine which it was,] upon his making the sign of the cross, fled away, after pointing out the way to the saint. Our author (St Jerome) adds, that St. Anthony soon after met a satyr who gave him to understand that he was an inhabitant of those deserts, and one of the sort whom the deluded

gentiles adored for gods." Ribadeneira describes this satyr as with withered nostrils, two little horns on his forehead, and the feet of a goat. After two days' search, St. Anthony found St. Paul, and a raven brought a loaf, whereupon they took their coporal refecton. The next morning, St. Paul told him he was going to die, and bid him fetch a cloak given to St. Anthony by St. Athanasius, and wrap his body in it. St. Anthony then knew that St. Paul must have been informed of the cloak by revelation, and went forth from the desert to fetch it; but before his return St. Paul had died, and St. Anthony found two lions digging his grave with their claws, wherein he buried St. Paul, first wrapping him in St. Athanasius's cloak, and preserving, as a great treasure, St. Paul's garment, made of palm tree leaves stitched together. How St. Jerome, in his conclusion of St. Paul's life, praises this garment, may be seen in Ribadeneira.

Arguments proving that the Christian Religion ruins all those States where it is the Established Religion.

Abridged from a work translated from the French, and first published in 1698.

Continued from page 208.

ARTICLE VIII. Relates to the ridiculous festivals that they observe, wherein the poor idolatrous people lose their time; besides the debaucheries which this abuse indispensably occasions in Christian countries; which, together, cannot be reckoned at less than 50,000,000 of livres loss per annum. For, supposing that the industry of the nation might have been formerly valued at above 600,000,000 per annum; supposing, too, there are above fifty working days lost in a year by festivals in general, without reckoning Sundays and some other remarkable festivals, that would be the sixth part of the people's industry lost, which amounts to 100,000,000 per annum. We must also take notice, that, besides these general festivals and holy days, there are many particular festivals, viz.—those of every parish, which has its particular saint, whose image the people adore, according to the doctrine of their councils; the festivals of saints for every profession, trade, and distemper; the festivals of beasts, or saints that are patrons of beasts; so that there is much above the sixth part of the people's time lost. I confess that the time of these holy days is not absolutely lost; for the people attend to housekeeping, dress victuals, and take care of their cattle on Sunday, &c., and some other profitable things are done, as travelling by land and sea; and mariners are employed on those days, as well as others. But then, if we consider that these holy days debauch the people, teach them bad habits of idleness, drunkenness, and immodesty, which hinder them from working on other days, ruin their families, occasion abundance of disorders, quarrels, diseases, fires, and the deaths of many people, one may easily perceive that the damage occasioned by these festivals amounts to above one hundred million per annum. Masters suffer very much by this libertinism of their servants and apprentices; and some poor wives at home are grieved to consider that their husbands are at the public-house, spending all that they had gained in several days, and will come home drunk, and perhaps beat them into the bargain.

If it be pretended that men work the better, and are the more vigorous the days after the festival, because they have had some rest,—that may be true as to some people; but for the greatest part, it hath a contrary effect,—

their idleness and debauchery make them lose those and many others ; and if all of them do not debauch themselves on those days, they spend them, at least, in races and unprofitable walks, which fatigue them more than their ordinary works ; and to those who are of a regular temper, these holy days are perfectly irksome. I am really of opinion, that the disorders above-mentioned, which are the result of, or inseparably annexed to, those festivals, do almost as much mischief as the holy-days themselves ; and experience shews us daily that there is more insolence and disorder committed on one holy-day than on three others, by the ill habits which they contract. Most masters of shops in town complain that they cannot find journeymen to work on the day which succeeds a holy-day ; nay, nor on Mondays, because of the Sunday preceding ; the rabble usually disordering themselves so much on those holy-days, that they cannot work the day after. I take no notice here of the disorders and debaucheries that are committed at their midnight masses.

To this I may join their loss of time in their scandalous pilgrimages ; it being known that sometimes they go as far as Rome, and Loretto, and St. James de Compostella, in Spain, &c. and now and then as far as Jerusalem. Besides, they lose abundance of time in shrifting or confessing themselves, and at their anniversary-days, Ash-Wednesday, &c. and by carrying their pretended sacrament, or God, about every day, by four persons at a time, besides the priest who holds it in his hands ; and this is, perhaps, in fifty places at once in some great cities. They lose also abundance of time in their daily masses, which are said without any shadow of necessity, but merely to subsist the Pope's troops in those countries under his influence, at the charge of the people. They have, moreover, the private masses for the cure of their cattle, at which every one who is interested is obliged to assist. They lose abundance of time at all these follies, of which I might make an article apart, also their Ambarvalia and Rogation Week, (which they have borrowed from the Pagans, as they have done most of the rest of their religion,) by which they think to procure rain, or divert boisterous seasons, which might injure their corn. And this loss of time is so much the more ruinous to France, that there are abundance of more people in it unfit for work, proportionably, than in England, viz. lawyers, and other civil officers, with useless and ignorant clergymen, &c.

To be continued.

Free Press Association.—A scientific lecture will be delivered in the Hall of the "Free Press Association," on Sunday (to-morrow) the 27th inst. at 11 o'clock forenoon.

In the afternoon, the *theological* lectures will be continued at 3 o'clock.

Removal.—The office of the Correspondent is removed to 422 Broadway, near Canal street.

* * * The first four numbers of the *Correspondent* being now reprinted, complete sets can be had at the original subscription price.